

VZCZCXRO7775  
OO RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHNR #2457/01 3381354  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 041354Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1710  
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE  
RUZEFAA/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE  
RUZEFAA/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE  
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002457

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2019

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - CLAN ALLIANCE RE-GROUPS AS AL-SHABAAB  
MOVES INTO KEY LOWER JUBA TOWN

REF: NAIROBI 2397

Classified By: Political Counselor Bob Patterson; reasons 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The reportedly tactical withdrawal of Ahmed Madobe and clan militia from Dhobley this week resulted in an unopposed al-Shabaab move into that key Lower Juba town. Multiple contacts tell us Madobe's move, rather than signaling an end game in Lower Juba, indicates a shift in Ogaden-clan strategy meant to broaden the anti-Shabaab alliance. Key Ogaden-clan leaders as of early December were meeting in the northeast Kenyan town of Garissa to discuss next steps in confronting al-Shabaab and to hold talks with the Kenyans. Ahmed Madobe's second in command on December 2 reportedly planned to soon hold a press conference and address "al-Shabaab propaganda." While al-Shabaab clearly made significant gains in recent days, we think it is premature to call it "game over" in Lower Juba. Clan militia, for example, on December 4 began to engage al-Shabaab forces in Dhobley. We think the reported shift in Ogaden-clan strategy could work to broaden the anti-Shabaab alliance. We are encouraging all forces confronting al-Shabaab in Lower Juba to work together. End Summary.

¶2. (C) In what multiple contacts describe as a tactical retreat, Ogaden clan militia leader Ahmed Madobe and clan militia on November 28 vacated the Lower Juba town of Dhobley, which allowed al-Shabaab to move in unopposed behind him. (Dhobley is on the Somalia - Kenya border.) Contacts close to Madobe tell us that he has since moved to his traditional stronghold south of Kismayo in order to prepare training areas for an anti-Shabaab militia. A key Ogaden clan leader on December 1 told us that Madobe was advised by clan elders that he should stay in Somalia and not attend an Ogaden/Mohamed Zubeyr clan meeting in Garissa (Kenya). The clan elders reportedly feared Madobe's absence from Lower Juba would allow al-Shabaab to claim that Madobe had "fled" to Kenya. Ahmed Madobe's second-in-command was reportedly planning to give a press interview in Nairobi and address what he described as al-Shabaab propaganda. On December 4, clan militia affiliated with the anti-Shabaab alliance reportedly began to re-engage al-Shabaab forces in Dhobley. (Note: The Darod/Kabalah/Absame/Ogaden/Mohamed Zubeyr subclan is the most powerful subclan within the Darod/Kabalah anti-Shabaab alliance in Lower Juba. End note).

¶3. (C) Multiple contacts tell us that Madobe's departure from Dhobley, rather than signaling "game over" in Lower Juba, indicates a shift in Ogaden-clan strategy meant to broaden the anti-Shabaab alliance. As of December 2, key Ogaden clan leaders including but not limited to, Madobe's

representatives Ibrahim Shukri, Mohamed Amin, and clan delegations from Afmadow and Dhobley, and the ugas of the Mohamed Zubeyr subclan Yusuf Abdi Hassan were meeting in the northeast Kenya town of Garissa to discuss next steps in the fight against al-Shabaab. Contacts in the region tell us that shifting dynamics within the Mohamed Zubeyr are likely to create greater unity within the subclan and may help broaden the anti-Shabaab alliances' base. Ogaden leaders who before feared Ahmed Madobe would ultimately work to set up an administration in the name of Ras Kamboni have apparently changed their minds. Most Ogaden leaders reportedly now view Madobe and his militia as having been successfully contained by the clan's interests and, consequently, are more willing to add their militia to the fight against al-Shabaab (reftel).

¶4. (C) In addition to attempting to solidify the intra-Mohamed Zubeyr alliance, Ogaden leaders plan to discuss ways to bring smaller subclans and minority clans in Lower Juba into the now predominately Darod/Kabalah alliance. Ogaden leaders told us they think they can appeal to non Ogaden/Absame subclans in Lower Juba, such as the Galjacel, Biyo Mal (Bantu), Shekal, and Awaro Mali, by offering to train their militia. In addition, Darod/Kabalah leaders are reportedly negotiating with the Darod/Marehan in Kismayo, a relatively small group that formed a tactical alliance with al-Shabaab because they did not want to lose access to Kismayo port revenues (reftel).

¶5. (C) Our contacts tell us that the group in Garissa intends to hold talks with Kenyan MP Abdirahman Hassan Ali "Alow",

NAIROBI 00002457 002 OF 002

also from the Mohamed Zubeyr subclan, and other unnamed Kenyan officials. (Note MP "Alow" does not appear to be an influential player in northeast Kenyan politics, however. End note.) Ogaden elders reportedly intend to ask the Kenyans to modify the ethnic Somali leadership of the Kenyan plan to train Somalis because current commanders Abdi Mahdi and Fartag are too close to the Ethiopians and Gedo region Darod/Marehan interests.

¶6. (C) Multiple contacts from the region tell us that TFG Deputy Prime Minister Sharif Hassan and other unnamed officials convinced President Sheikh Sharif to back away from Ahmed Madobe and organic forces inside Lower Juba. DPM Hassan and Gedo region Marehan also reportedly convinced the Kenyans to back away from the Lower Juba anti-Shabaab alliance and to include Ethiopian proxies and anti-Ogaden players in their plan to train Somalis to fight in Lower Juba. The Ogaden leaders told us that they are asking the Kenyans to change the commanders because they do not want conflict between the anti-Shabaab alliance inside Lower Juba and ethnic Somalis being trained in Kenya if/when the Kenyan trainees move across the border. (Note: Instead of training Somalis in and from Lower Juba, the Kenyans decided to provide training inside Kenya. We believe that most if not all of the current trainees are in fact Somali refugees and ethnic Somali Kenyans from northeast Kenya (reftel).)

¶7. (C) Comment: While al-Shabaab clearly made significant gains in recent days, we think it is premature to pronounce it "game over" in Lower Juba. We think it is far more likely that, despite al-Shabaab recent success, territory in Lower Juba will continue to periodically change hands as al-Shabaab struggles to consolidate control over clan strongholds where it enjoys little support. Al-Shabaab and aligned militia, however, will most likely remain in control of Kismayo for the time being. We think the reported shift in Ogaden strategy could work to broaden the Lower Juba anti-Shabaab alliance. We are encouraging all forces confronting al-Shabaab in Lower Juba to cooperate.

RANNEBERGER